

Documents on Diplomacy: The Source

The Fabric of Peace is in Immediate Danger *Department of State Press Release, September 26, 1938*

The President this morning sent the following message direct to the President of Czechoslovakia and the Chancellor of Germany and through the Secretary of State to the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France:

"The fabric of peace on the continent of Europe, if not throughout the rest of the world, is in immediate danger. The consequences of its rupture are incalculable. Should hostilities break out the lives of millions of men, women and children in every country involved will most certainly be lost under circumstances of unspeakable horror.

"The economic system of every country involved is certain to be shattered. The social structure of every country involved may well be completely wrecked.

"The United States has no political entanglements. It is caught in no mesh of hatred. Elements of all Europe have formed its civilization.

"The supreme desire of the American people is to live in peace. But in the event of a general war they face the fact that no nation can escape some measure of the consequences of such a world catastrophe.

"The traditional policy of the United States has been the furtherance of the settlement of international disputes by pacific means. It is my conviction that all people under the threat of war today pray that peace may be made before, rather than after, war.

"It is imperative that peoples everywhere recall that every civilized nation of the world voluntarily assumed the solemn obligations of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 to solve controversies only by pacific methods. In addition, most nations are

parties to other binding treaties obligating them to preserve peace. Furthermore, all countries have today available for such peaceful solution of difficulties which may arise, treaties of arbitration and conciliation to which they are parties.

"Whatever may be the differences in the controversies at issue and however difficult of pacific settlement they may be, I am persuaded that there is no problem so difficult or so pressing for solution that it cannot be justly solved by the resort to reason rather than by the resort to force.

"During the present crisis the people of the United States and their Government have earnestly hoped that the negotiations for the adjustment of the controversy which has now arisen in Europe might reach a successful conclusion.

"So long as these negotiations continue so long will there remain the hope that reason and the spirit of equity may prevail and that the world may thereby escape the madness of a new resort to war.

"On behalf of the 130 millions of people of the United States of America and for the sake of humanity everywhere I most earnestly appeal to you not to break off negotiations looking to a peaceful, fair, and constructive settlement of the questions at issue.

"I earnestly repeat that so long as negotiations continue, differences may be reconciled. Once they are broken off reason is banished and force asserts itself.

"And force produces no solution for the future good of humanity.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Source

Vincent Ferraro Home Page at Mt. Holyoke College Source: U.S. Department of State, Publication 1983, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943, pp. 424-425

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/interwar/fdr12.htm>